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The World Parish Series
Edited by Elmer T. Clark

MEXICO . . .

And What the Methodists
Are Doing There



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Board of Missions and Church Extension
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In the present confused state of foreign affairs changes are constantly occurring, and this must be borne in mind in the interpretation and use of the material contained in any of the booklets of this series. The data have been checked and approved by the administrative secretaries and are regarded as approximately accurate as of May, 1941. Sources of information include the *Handbook of Methodist Missions* (prepared in mimeograph form for office use by the Foreign Divisions in 1940), *Year Book of The Board of Missions of The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1940*, *The Church and The World Parish*, by Elmer T. Clark, *World Almanac*, 1941, the various standard encyclopedias, missionary histories and atlases, and the records and correspondence of the Board of Missions and Church Extension of The Methodist Church. Church statistics are from the *Minutes of The Annual Conferences* and are for 1939-40 unless otherwise stated. "F" or an asterisk (*) before or after the name of a missionary means "On furlough." "SF" means "Special furlough."

MEXICO

Mexico has an area of 767,198 square miles and a population of sixteen millions. More than four million are Indians, eight and a half million are of mixed blood, and only a million and a half are pure white people. There are millions of acres of virgin soil and millions more which are but skimmed by antiquated agricultural implements. Fine timber lands are estimated at twenty-five million acres. Oil is abundant. Mexico has the two largest refineries in the world, and during the past few years has exported from 50,000,000 to 115,000,000 barrels annually.

The Spanish conquistador, Cortez, landed in 1519 with the declaration: "The Spanish have a disease which only gold can cure." The Spanish and Catholic domination continued for three hundred years and then began the long series of struggles to shake off the double despotism of State and Church.

Since the first decade of the nineteenth century there have been almost continuous wars. In passing from Spanish autocracy to democracy Mexico has developed three constitutions.

The first constitution, that of 1824, tolerated no religion save Catholicism, but in spite of that clause and the perpetuation of the *fueros*, or right of priests accused of crimes to be tried in their own courts, the Church attempted rebellion. Mexico replied by abolishing the *fueros*, nationalizing Church property, and suppressing religious orders. In 1857 a second constitution contained a bill of rights, guaranteed freedom of worship, took the priests from the government pay roll, and provided that no institution could own more property than was required for its own use. To this the clericals responded, as before, by armed opposition.

A third constitution was adopted in 1917. By this time a second problem had been added to the age-old problem of Catholic domination. Foreign interests, mainly American,

had secured millions of acres of Mexico's most valuable mineral and oil lands and owned one-fifth of all the private land. The framers of the constitution of 1917 attempted the solution of both problems.

The new constitution provided that Churches may not own property; church buildings belong to the nation. A Church may not maintain monastic orders, primary schools, or charitable institutions. Their journals cannot comment on political matters. Ministers of religion must be Mexicans by birth and registered by the government which determines the number needed in any locality; a recent court decision has held, however, that persons may hold religious services in their homes.

Only the surface of the soil is subject to private ownership; oil and mineral rights can be operated privately, royalties being paid to the government, but cannot be owned outright. Further, all such owners and operators must be Mexican citizens; foreigners desiring such rights must be regarded as Mexicans and agree not to invoke the protection of their governments in regard to property.

There are nine universities and 22,570 schools of primary and intermediate grade in Mexico, but in 1930 59 per cent of the population over ten years of age were illiterate.

Methodist Beginnings

Protestants could undertake no activity of any kind until after the Reform Laws of 1859. Between that time and the beginning of the century several denominations entered the field.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, looked to Mexico as a promising mission field soon after the Civil War. Bishop Keener visited the country and found a small Protestant group which had been formed in 1865 by Sostheenes Juarez. This man had embraced Protestant principles as a result of reading the Bible, and his "Band of Christian Friends" was the first Protestant organization in Mexico. Juarez joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and in 1871 his "band" became a Methodist Church. On Bishop Keener's return to the United States he sent to Mexico the

Rev. Alejo Hernandez, a Mexican who had been preaching to his fellow countrymen in Texas.

The Methodist Episcopal Church opened work in Mexico the same year the missionaries of the Southern branch of the Church went in. The pioneer was Dr. John W. Butler. After the division of territory the Northern Church worked mainly in the central and southern areas while the Southern Church confined itself to the north adjoining its work in the United States.

The anti-clerical laws of Mexico, though directed against the Roman Catholic Church, applied to Protestants also, and caused much inconvenience and uncertainty to Methodism. The Church could not own property, bishops could not hold conferences, foreign missionaries could not preach, the Church could not maintain primary schools. In 1925, 1926, and 1927 the annual conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Mexico met on the border, the sessions being held on the Texas side, where the bishop could preside and ordain the preachers. In 1928 the conference met in Mexico under the presidency of a Mexican preacher, and the preachers elected to orders came to the United States to be ordained. This state of affairs made necessary the organization of an autonomous Methodist Church of Mexico, which was set up in 1930.

Methodist Church of Mexico

The *Iglesia Metodista de Mexico* resulted from the union, in July, 1930, of the church constituencies in Mexico of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. It is completely autonomous, all its ministers and officers being natives of Mexico.

The Church has two Annual Conferences, corresponding closely to the two pre-union bodies, and known as the Central and Frontier Annual Conferences. The general superintendent or bishop is elected for four years. Final authority is vested in the quadrennial General Conference, composed of ministers and laymen in equal numbers. The General Conference does not own property.

Institutions

Chihuahua

Sanatorio Palmore — Hospital and nurses' training school
Centro Cristiano—The first social center in Mexico
Student Hostel—Home for girls attending schools in the city

Durango

Centro MacDonell — Christian social center

Guanajuato

Girls' Hostel—Home for girls attending schools

Mexico City

Evangelical Seminary of Mexico—A union seminary called Centro Evangelico Unido, in which Methodists, Congregationalists, Disciples, and Friends co-operate in the training of ministerial and lay workers. Its headquarters are in a Methodist church in the city
Bible Training School—Training school for deaconesses
Girls' Hostel—Home for girls
Dispensary—Clinic under the direction of a Mexican woman doctor

Union Publishing House

Monterrey

Laurens Institute—A school of primary and secondary grade, for many years supported by the Rosebud Missionary Society of Virginia, now conducted by Professor L. Marroquin

Boys' Dormitory—A home for students attending Laurens Institute and other institutions

Centro Social—Christian social center

Student Hostel—Home for girls attending schools

Pachuca

Girls' Hostel—Home for girls attending schools

Puebla

Instituto Mexicano Madero—A school for boys conducted by F. Cruz-Aedo

Girls' Hostel—Home for girls attending schools

Saltillo

Centro Social Roberts—Christian social center

Missionaries

Chihuahua

Mr. L. B. Newberry, Treasurer, Mission Board
Mrs. L. B. Newberry
Miss Emma L. Eldridge, Centro Cristiano
Miss M. Belle Markey, Centro Cristiano
Miss Pearl Hall, Nurse, Sanatorio Palmore
(F) Miss Irene Nixon, Centro Cristiano

Miss Edna Pothoff, Nurse, Sanatorio Palmore
Miss Lula Rawls, Nurse, Sanatorio Palmore
Miss Martha Daniels, Centro Cristiano

Cortazar

Miss Mary Baird, Evangelistic Work

Papalotla

(F) Miss Jeanette Hoffman, Evangelistic Work

(F) Miss Hazel McAllister,
Evangelistic Work

General Teran

Miss Anne Deavours, Rural
Work

Guanajuato

Miss Mary Pearson, Social Cen-
ter

Mexico City

Mr. J. P. Hauser, Teacher in
Union Theological Seminary;
Treasurer of Mission and
other funds

Mrs. J. P. Hauser, Teacher,
Union Theological Semi-
nary; Woman's Work

Rev. Milton C. Davis, Presi-
dent, Evangelical Seminary

Mrs. Milton C. Davis

(F) Miss Gertrude Arbogast,
Evangelistic Work

Miss Ethel Thomas, Industrial
School Hostel

Miss Ruth V. Warner, Bible
Training School

Monterrey

Miss Anna B. Dyck, Centro So-
cial

Miss Helen Hodgson, Centro
Social

Miss Dora Schmidt, Centro So-
cial

Nogales

Miss Virginia Booth, Social-
Evangelistic Work

Pachuca

(F) Miss Elsie M. Shepherd,
Evangelistic Work

Puebla

Miss Addie C. Dyer, Evangelis-
tic Work

Miss May B. Seal, Girls' Hos-
tel

Ramos Arizpe

(F) Miss Dora L. Ingram, Ru-
ral Work

Saltillo

Miss Ola E. Callahan, Centro
Social Roberts

Miss Lillie F. Fox, Centro So-
cial Roberts. (F)

Miss Lucile Vail, Centro Social
Roberts

Villa Frontera

Miss Ruth E. Byerly, Rural
Work

Status of the Methodist Church of Mexico

Number of ordained national preachers in Conference:

Full members	53
On trial	6
Not ordained	3
Number of local preachers	42
Unordained national preachers in addition to 3 on trial	23
All other national church workers:	
Men	5
Women	20
Total national workers	118
Number of church members	10,262
Number of preparatory members	5,804
Total members	16,066
Number of Sunday schools	132
Enrollment in Sunday schools	8,271
Number of Epworth League	82
Members of Epworth League	2,020
Number of churches and chapels	102

